

A SUFFICIENT
ANSWER.

T O

Letters to the AUTHOR

O F

Theron and Aspasio;

In a Letter to the *Author*.

By JOHN WESLEY, M. A.



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ANSWER, &c.

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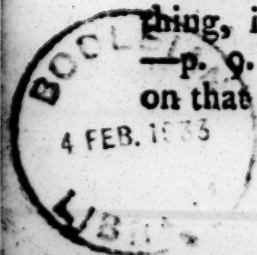
S I R,

 T is not very material, who you are. If Mr. *Glass* is alive, I suppose you are he. If not, you are at least one of his humble Admirers, and probably, not very old. So your Youth may in some Measure plead your Excuse, for such a peculiar Pertness, Insolence and Self-sufficiency, with such an utter Contempt of all Mankind, as no other Writer of the present Age has shewn.

As you use no Ceremony toward any Man, so neither shall I use any toward you, but bluntly propose a few Objections to your late Performance, which stare a Man in the Face as soon as he looks in it.

I OBJECT, First, That you are a gross, wilful Slanderer. For 1. You say of Mr. *Hervey*, "He shuts up our Access to the Divine Righteousness, by holding forth a Preliminary Human one as necessary to our enjoying the Benefit of it."—p. 4.

AGAIN. "You set Men to work, to do something, in order to make their Peace with GOD."—p. 9. This is an absolute Slander, founded on that poor Pretence, that he supposes those who Repent



Repent and Believe, and none but those to “enjoy the Benefit of *Christ's* Righteousness.” And has he not the Warrant of *Christ* Himself for so doing? *Repent ye and believe the Gospel?* If this is “teaching Man to acquire a Righteousness of his own,” the Charge falls on our LORD Himself.

You say 2. “As to that strange Something which you call Faith, after all you have told us about it, we are at as great a Loss to tell distinctly what it is, as when you began.”—p. 9.

THIS is another Slander. You are at no Loss (as will presently appear) to tell what Mr. *Hervey* means by Faith. Whether it be right or wrong, his Account of it is as clear and distinct as any that ever was given.

You say, 3. “The Popular Preachers, (so you term Archbishop *Tillotson*, Dr. *Lucas*, *Crisp*, *Doddridge*, *Watts*, *Gill*; Mr. *Gutbrie*, *Boston*, *Erskine*, *Willison*; Mr. *Flavel*, *Marshall*; Mr. *Griffith Jones*, *Hervey*, *Romaine*, *Whitefield*, *Wesley*,) never tell us what they mean by Faith, but by some labour'd Circumlocutions.”—p. 282.

THIS is a Third palpable Slander, as your own Words prove, “They say, Faith is a real Persuasion, that *Christ* hath died for me.”—p. 5. Are you not here told, what they mean by Faith? And that without any Circumlocution at all?

You confute your own Slander still farther, by adding Three more. 4. “They make a *pious Resolve* the Ground of our Acceptance with GOD.”—p. 360. No, never. Not one of the Writers you have named, ever did, or does so now. 5. “The Faith they talk of, is only a *timid Resolve*, joined with a *fond Conjecture*. Or, 6. It is a *fond, presumptuous Wish*, greatly embarrass'd with Doubts and Difficulties.”—p. 404.

SLANDER all over. We make the Righteousness and Blood of *Christ*, the only Ground of our

Acceptance with GOD. And the Faith we talk of is neither more nor less than a Divine Conviction, that *Christ* loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*.

You say, 7. "All who preach this Doctrine are of the World, and speak of the World; therefore the World heareth them.—p. 14. Therefore they will always be attended by the Body of the People."—p. 37.

A SAD Mistake this, in Point of Fact. For whither they are of the World or no, it is certain the World, the Generality of Men (good or bad) doth not, and never did hear them. At this Day those who hear them are an exceeding small Number, in Comparison of those who do not. And if *the Body of the People* in any Place do *attend* some of them, How do they attend? Just as they would a Mad Dog: With Sticks and Stones and whatever comes to Hand.

AND this you yourself account for extremely well. *Sed oportet Palæmonem esse memorem.* "What a Figure would a small Number of Ministers make, in the Church either of *England* or *Scotland*, who should agree to maintain the plain obvious Sense, of their own publick Standards of Doctrine; and insist upon an Adherence to that Sense, as a Term of holding Communion with them in the Sacred Institutions? Their Situation in the National Church would be very uncomfortable as well as extremely ridiculous. For many Enemies would soon be awakened against them, to distress and misrepresent them in various Respects."—p. 465.

THUS much as a Specimen of your Veracity. I object, Secondly, That you know not what Faith is? You talk about it and about it, and labour and sweat, and at last come to a most lame and impotent Conclusion.

You say, "That *Christ* died for *me* is a Point not easily settled, a Point which the Scripture no where

where ascertains :” (The very Thought, and nearly the Words of Cardinal *Bellarmino*, in his Dispute with our Forefathers.) “ So far from it, that it Affirms the final Perdition of many, who have great Confidence of their Interest in *Christ*.” (This only proves, that many *fancy* they have what they have not; which I suppose no Body will deny.) “ Yea, and declares, that *wide is the Gate and broad is the Way that leadeth to Destruction*.”—p. 14. It is so; but this is nothing to the Point, The Nature of true Faith.

“ NATURE, these Men say, begins the Work :” (I know none of them who say so) “ And then Grace helps out the Efforts of Nature, and persuades a Man, tho’ he be not mentioned in Scripture, either by Name or Surname, that *Christ* died for Him.—p. 33. So the Spirit whispers something to the Heart of a Sinner, beside what he publicly speaks in the Scriptures. But will any Lover of the Scriptures allow the *Possibility* of this? That the Spirit should *ever* speak a Syllable to any Man, beside what he publicly speaks there ?”—p. 35. You will presently allow something wonderfully like it. And you suppose yourself to be a Lover of the Scriptures.

“ SOME of the Martyrs were assured of being the Friends of *Christ*.”—p. 398. How? Which Way? Neither their Name nor Surname was mentioned in Scripture! Why, “ The Holy Ghost assured their Hearts and the Hearts of the First Christians, That their Joy was not the Joy of the Hypocrite, but the Beginning of eternal Life. Thus their Joy was made full, and their Love perfected by the highest Enjoyments it was here capable of.—Every Believer finds a Refreshment to his Mind, far superior to all the Comforts of this Life. They stand in God’s Presence and

have their Joy made full in beholding the Light of his Countenance.”—p. 402.

ALLOW this and we will never dispute, Whether the Spirit does or does not “whisper any Thing to their Hearts.” It is enough, that they have *the Spirit of Adoption, crying in their Hearts, Abba, Father: And that this Spirit witnesses with their Spirits, that they are the Children of GOD.*

“THE chief Time of this Agency of the Spirit is, while the Preachers are declaiming. And the People are in continual Expectation of the Season of Power in hearing them.”—p. 38.

Yea, and Reason good, if as you affirm, “Hearing is the *only Mean* whereby GOD gives Faith.”—p. 391. But we do not affirm so much. We only maintain, That Faith generally *cometh by Hearing.*

BUT you go on. “They who partake of *Christ’s Joy* receive the highest Evidence that he is the *Christ*. Thus their Faith is greatly confirmed, by a Kind of Presence of its Object. Their Love is joyfully inflamed, and they obtain the Assurance of Hope, by having in themselves an Experimental Foretast of their eternal Enjoyment.”—p. 415.

WHY then what are we disputing about, seeing you are now so kind as to allow, not only the *Possibility*, but the *real Existence* of all that we contend for?

“O, but this is not *Faith*. Faith is quite another Thing.” What is it? Let us hear *your Account* of it.

“THE Essence of true Faith is the Eternal GOD.”—p. 288.

“WHAT is Faith? It is the Blood of *Christ*.”—p. 330.

STARK, staring Nonsense! Sir, you can talk Sense, if you please. Why should you palm upon your Readers such Stuff as this?

VERY

VERY little better than this is your Third Definition. "The Truth which a Man believes is his Faith."—p. 301. No, it is not: No more than the Light which a Man sees is his Sight. You must therefore guess again. "To believe this Fact, *Christ* rose from the Dead, is Faith."—p. 169. "Ask a Man, is the Gospel true or not? If he holds it to be true, this is Faith."—p. 296. But is this Saving Faith? "Yes. Every one that believes the Gospel History shall be saved."—p. 333.

THIS is flat and plain. And if it is but true every Devil in Hell will be saved. For it is absolutely certain, every one of these, believes this Fact, *Christ* rose from the Dead. It is certain, every one of these, believes the Gospel-History. Therefore this is not Saving Faith: Neither will every one be saved, who believes this Fact, *Christ* rose from the Dead. It follows, That (whatever others do) you know not what Faith is.

I OBJECT Thirdly, 1. That you yourself "shut up our Access to the Divine Righteousness." 2. That you vehemently contradict yourself, and do the very Thing which you charge upon others.

1. You yourself shut up our Access to the Divine Righteousness, by destroying that Repentance which *Christ* has made the Way to it. "Ask Men, you say, have they sinned, or not? If they know they have, this is Conviction. And this is Preparation enough for Mercy." Soft Casuistry indeed! He that receives this Saying, is never likely either to *repent* or *believe the Gospel*. And if he do not, he can have no Access to the Righteousness of *Christ*.

YET you strangely affirm, "A careless Sinner is in full as hopeful a Way, as one that is the most deeply convicted."—p. 292. How can this be, if that Conviction be from GOD? Where He has begun the Work, will he not finish it? Have we not

Reason

Reason to hope this? But in a careless Sinner that Work is not begun; perhaps never will be.

AGAIN. Whereas our LORD gives a general Command, *Seek and ye shall find*; you say, Saving Faith was never yet *sought*, or in the remotest Manner *wished for* by an Unbeliever:—p. 372. A Proposition as contrary to the whole Tenor of Scripture, as to the Experience of every true Believer. Every one who now believes knows, How he *sought* and *wished for* that Faith, before he experienced it. It is not true, even with regard to *your* Faith, a Belief of the Bible. For I know Deists at this Day, who have often *wished* they could believe the Bible, and owned “it was happy for them that could.”

2. You vehemently contradict yourself, and do the very Thing which you charge upon others.

“IF we imagine we possess or desire to attain any Requisite to our Acceptance with GOD, beside or in Connexion with the *bare Work of Christ*, *Christ* shall profit us nothing.”—p. 96.

AGAIN. “What is required of us in order to our Acceptance with GOD? Nothing. The least Attempt to do any Thing is damnably criminal.”—

Very good. Now, for Self-consistency. “What *Christ* has done is that which quiets the Conscience of Man, as soon as *he knows it*. So that he need ask no more than, “Is it true or not? If he *finds it true*, he is happy. If he does not, he can reap no Comfort from it. Our Comfort arises from *the Persuasion* of this.”—p. 12.

AGAIN. “Men are justified by a *Knowledge* of the Righteousness of *Christ*.”—p. 406. And yet again,

“THE sole Requisite to Acceptance is, Divine Righteousness *brought to View*.”—p. 291.

So you have brought Matters to a fine Conclusion, confuting an Hundred of your own Assertions, and

and doing the very Thing for which you have been all along so unmercifully condemning others. You yourself here teach another "Requisite to our Acceptance, beside *the bare Work of Christ*," viz. *The knowing that Work, the finding it true.* Therefore by your own Word, "*Christ shall profit you nothing.*" In one Page you say, "Nothing is required, in order, to our Acceptance with God : In another, Divine Righteousness *brought to View* is requisite to our Acceptance. *Brought to View!* What Self-righteousness is this? Which of the popular Preachers could have done worse! "Men are justified by a *Knowledge of the Righteousness of Christ.*" Knowledge! What *our own* Knowledge! *Knowledge in us?* Why this is the very Thing which we call Faith. So you have fairly given up the whole Question, justified your Opponents, and condemned yourself as *damnably criminal!*

I OBJECT, Fourthly, That you have no Charity, and that you know not what Charity is. That you know not what it is, manifestly appears, from the wonderful Definition you give of it. "Charity, you say, is Fellowship with God in his Blessedness."—p. 453. Muddy, confused, *ut nihil supra!* We know he that loveth, hath Fellowship with God. But yet the Ideas of one and of the other are widely different. We know God is Love: *And he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God and God in him.* But yet loving him is not the same Thing with dwelling in him. If it were the whole Sentence would be flat Tautology.

You say, 2. Charity is, "the Love of the Truth."—p. 456. Not at all: No more than it is the Love of the Sun. It is the Love of God, and of Man for God's Sake: No more and no less.

You say, 3. "*Christ* is known to us only by Report." (That is not granted) "And Charity is the Love of that Report."—p. 455. Every intelligent

ligent Reader will want no further Proof, that you know not what Charity is.

No Wonder then that you have it not: Nay, that you are at the utmost Distance, both from the Love of GOD and of your Neighbour. You cannot love GOD, because you do not love your Neighbour. For he that loves GOD, loves his Brother also. But such Hatred, Malevolence, Rancour, Bitterness as you shew, to all who do not exactly fall in with your Opinion, was scarce ever seen in a Jew, an Heathen, or a Popish Inquisitor.

“NAY, but you abhor Persecution. You would persecute no Man.” I should be very loath to trust you. I doubt were it in your Power, you would make more Bonfires in *Smithfield* than *Burner* and *Gardiner* put together. But if not, if you would not persecute with Fire and Faggot,

—————*Mirum!*

Ut neq; calce Lupus quenquam neq; dente petit bos:
What does this prove? Only that you murder in another Way. You smite with the Tongue: With the Poison of Asps which is under your Lips.

A FEW Specimens follow :

“THE popular Preachers worship another GOD.”—p. 338. “It can never be allowed that *Dr. Doddridge* worshiped the same GOD with *Paul*.”—p. 470. “Notice the Difference betwixt the GOD of these Preachers and the true GOD; betwixt their *Christ* and the *Christ* preached by the Apostles, betwixt their Spirit, and the Spirit that influenced the Apostles.”—p. 40.

“I know no Sinners more hardned, none greater Destroyers of Mankind than they.”—p. 98. “By no small Energy of Deceit, they darken the Revelation of GOD, and change the Doctrine of the blessed GOD, into a Doctrine of Self-dependence.” Strange! That you yourself should do the very same Thing! Averring, that “Men are justified,

justified, by a *Knowledge of the Righteousness of Christ*," not, by the *bare Work* which *Christ* has wrought! You put me in Mind of an old Usurer, who vehemently thank'd a Minister that had preached a severe Sermon against Usury. And being ask'd, Why do you talk thus, replied "I wish there were no Usurer in *London beside myself*!" Sir, Do not you wish, there were no Minister in *Great-Britain* who taught this Doctrine *beside yourself*?

"THAT any who has learnt his Religion from the New-Testament, should mistake their Doctrine for the Christian is astonishing."—p. 40. Theirs, or yours; for it happens to be one and the same with regard to the present Point. "By many Deceits they *change the Truth of GOD into a Lie*."—ib. If they do, so do you. Indeed you heavily complain of the Imputation. You say, "It is both astonishing and provoking, that after all, Men will say, there is no Difference between *their Scheme* and *yours*." And yet, after all, so it is: Truth is great and *will prevail*. In the leading Point, that of Justification, both you and they teach, "Men are justified by a Knowledge of the Righteousness of *Christ*." Only they think, it is a Divine, Supernatural, Experimental Knowledge, wrought in the inmost Soul: And you think it is a bare historical Knowledge, of the same Kind with that which the Devils have.

ONE Specimen more of your unparallel'd Charity, which in any but yourself would be astonishing. "If any one chuses to go to Hell by a devout Path, let him study any one of those four famous Treatises, Mr. *Gutbrie's* Trial of a Saving Interest in *Christ*, Mr. *Marshall's* Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification, Mr. *Boston's* Human Nature in its four-fold State, and Dr. *Doddridge's* Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. If any profane Person who desires to be converted, enter into the Spirit

Spirit of those Books, he thereby becomes two-fold more a Child of Hell than he was before."—
p. 436.

SUCH is the Doctrine! Such is the Spirit of *Palamon*! Condemning the whole Generation of God's Children! Sending all his Opponents to Hell at once: Casting Arrows, Fire brands, Death on every Side! But I stop, God be merciful to thee a Sinner! And shew thee Compassion, though thou hast none for thy Fellow-Servants. Otherwise, it will be more tolerable, I will not say for *Seneca* or *Epictetus*; but for *Nero* or *Domitian* in the Day of Judgment than for Thee!

F I N I S.



